

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PARIS 30630 241809Z

53

ACTION AF-06

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5480

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

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C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 30630

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, UNGA, ET, FT

SUBJECT: 30TH UNGA FOURTH COMMITTEE, TERRITORY OF
AFARS AND THE ISSAS

REF: (A) STATE 276229 (B) ADDIS 12963 (C) PARIS 26908
(D) PARIS 24854 (B,C, AND D NOTAL)

1. WE CONCUR IN DEPARTMENT'S INCLINATION NOT TO CO-SPONSOR RESOLUTION ON THE TFAI AND TO ABSTAIN IN THE VOTING. GIVEN THE DELICACY OF THE QUESTION OF A CHANGE IN STATUS OF THE TFAI, WE DO NOT BELIEVE THE U.S. WOULD BE ACTING IN ITS INTERESTS TO REGRET "THE FAILURE OF THE ADMINISTERING POWER SO FAR TO COOPERATE WITH THE UN IN IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION" AND TO URGE "THE ADMINISTERING POWER TO COOPERATE WITH THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE", ELEMENTS OF THE ETHIOPIAN DRAFT WHICH DOUBTLESS WILL REAPPEAR IN ANY COMPROMISE TEXT.

2. BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY, WE ARE INCREASINGLY CONCERNED THAT THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT IN CARRYING OUT ITS DECISION TO GRANT INDEPENDENCE TO THE TFAI MAY BE TEMPTED TO ACT PRECIPITOUSLY. THE NOVEMBER 7 STATE-
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PAGE 02 PARIS 30630 241809Z

MENT TO FRANCE SOIR BY FORMER PRIME MINISTER MESSMER

THAT DJIBOUTI HAS LOST ITS STRATEGIC INTEREST FOR FRANCE, THAT IT IS A USELESS EXPENSE, AND THAT THE SOONER INDEPENDENCE IS GRANTED, THE BETTER, SIGNALLED TO THE GOF THE NON-EXISTENCE OF AN EXPECTED CENTER OF OPPOSITION WITHIN THE UDR AND GAVE EARLY INDEPENDENCE ADVOCATES A POWERFUL ALLY.

3. FOR WANT OF A MORE SATISFACTORY ALTERNATIVE, ALI AREF APPEARS TO HAVE SOLIDIFIED HIS POSITION AS FRANCE'S CHOSEN INSTRUMENT TO LEAD THE TERRITORY TO INDEPENDENCE EVEN THOUGH HIS PERFORMANCE AND FUTURE PROSPECTS ARE HIGHLY DEBATABLE. AT THE SAME TIME, WE HAVE SEEN NOTHING TO REASSURE US THAT THE FRENCH HAVE BEEN ABLE OR ARE LIKELY TO BE ABLE TO ACHIEVE THE GUARANTEES WHICH WOULD PREVENT SOMALI IRREDENTISM FROM THREATENING AN INDEPENDENT TFAI AND DESTABILIZING THE HORN. THE APPARENT GOF EXPECTATION THAT THE MAINTENANCE OF A FRENCH BASE AT DJIBOUTI WILL CONTRIBUTE IMPORTANTLY TO LIMITING POTENTIAL SOMALI AGGRESSIVENESS SEEMS TO US TO BE BASED MORE ON WISHFUL THINKING THAN ON AN OBJECTIVE ANALYSIS OF SOMALI INTENTIONS. THE FACT THAT MANY ISSAS WOULD NOT WISH TO BECOME PART OF A GREATER SOMALIA DOMINATED BY PRESIDENT SIAD DOES NOT, UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, REASSURE US.

4. WE THUS SUGGEST IT MIGHT BE USEFUL TO TAKE THE OPPORTUNITY AFFORDED BY FOURTH COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION OF TFAI TO GIVE THE FRENCH THE MESSAGE THAT WHILE WE SUPPORT THEIR DECOLONIZATION EFFORTS, WE CONSIDER DJIBOUTI'S FUTURE OF SUFFICIENT IMPORTANCE TO WARRANT CLOSE CONSULTATION BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES BEFORE THE FRENCH TAKE IRREVOCABLE DECISIONS AFFECTING THE FUTURE STABILITY OF THE REGION. IF THE DEPARTMENT AGREES, CLOSE CONSULTATION IN NEW YORK, WASHINGTON AND HERE ON THE TFAI RESOLUTION COULD GET THE PROCESS STARTED.
RUSH

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